

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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O 300838Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0192
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AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 2603

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR KS YO KN US
SUBJ: YUGOSLAV INITIATIVE FOR TRIPARTITE KOREA TALKS

REF: STATE 81722

1. IN LIGHT OF NORTH KOREAN RESPONSE TO YUGOSLAV INITIATIVE AS REPORTED PARA 3 REFTEL (WHICH WE HAVE NOT SHARED WITH ROKG) AND MAINICHI REPORT ON TRIPARTITE PROPOSAL AND ROKG RESPONSE (REPORTED SEPTTEL), I BELIEVE WE MUST RECAST OUR APPROACH TO THE ROK ON THIS MATTER, IF PROPOSAL IS TO MAKE ANY HEADWAY. PUBLIC RESPONSE OF ROKG TO JAPANESE PRESS LEAK CONTAINS RESERVATIONS GIVEN TO ME AS BASIS FOR NEGATIVE RESPONSE, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS LEAVING THE MATTER OPEN TO FURTHER STUDY. I BELIEVE, MOREOVER, THAT SENIOR OFFICIALS WILL VIEW LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AS ACCELERATION OF PACE OF THIS EFFORT AND WILL BE EVEN MORE CONCERNED TO KNOW HOW WE INTEND TO PROCEED SHOULD THE NORTH SHOW INTEREST IN THE PROPOSAL.

2. IN OUR APPROACH TO THE ROK TO DATE WE HAVE SOUGHT A REACTION IN PRINCIPLE TO THE CONCEPT OF A TRIPARTITE FORUM FOR TALKS AMONG THE U.S., ROK, AND PRK. WHEN ROK OFFICIALS HAVE ASKED FOR MORE DETAIL ON WHAT WE HAD IN
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MIND IN TERMS OF LEVEL AT WHICH TALKS WOULD BE HELD, AGENDA FOR SUCH TALKS, LOCATION, AND POSSIBLE PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS, WE HAVE NOTED THAT THIS WAS A YUGOSLAV PROPOSAL AND THAT SUCH DETAILS WERE NOT PROVIDED. WE HAVE FURTHER POINTED TO OUR BELIEF, AND THAT OF THE YUGOSLAVS, THAT THE REACTION OF THE NORTH WOULD BE NEGATIVE AS FURTHER JUSTIFICATION FOR NOT DEVELOPING A

FULL SCENARIO AT THIS TIME. RECENT REPORTS, HOWEVER, MAKE THE LATTER REASON LESS CERTAIN AND WILL, I BELIEVE, INCREASE PRESSURE ON ROK TO RECONSIDER NEGATIVE NATURE OF ITS REPLY. IF WE ARE TO MOVE THEM FORWARD, HOWEVER, WE MUST BE PREPARED TO SHARE WITH THEM OUR THINKING ON A GOING-IN POSITION ON SOME OF THE DETAILED POINTS THEY HAVE RAISED.

3. I WOULD PROPOSE, THEREFORE, THAT I BE AUTHORIZED TO APPROACH THE ROKG ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES. AFTER REVIEWING THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF THE PREMATURE RELEASE OF INFORMATION ON THE YUGOSLAV INITIATIVE IN JAPAN AND MODIFYING OUR VIEW OF THE POSSIBLE RESPONSE OF THE NORTH TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF PARA 3 REFTTEL, I WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR A FAVORABLE RESPONSE FROM THE ROKG. TO EASE CONCERNS, I WOULD PLAN TO STATE THAT WE WERE AWARE OF THE VAGUE NATURE OF THE YUGOSLAV PROPOSAL IN ITS PRESENT FORM, BUT, ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT IT MIGHT PROVE OF INTEREST TO THE NORTH, THE USG HAD GIVEN SOME THOUGHT TO THE DETAILS OF HOW IT MIGHT BE SHAPED, DETAILS WHICH I KNOW ARE OF CONCERN TO THE ROKG. MORE SPECIFICALLY, I WOULD HOPE TO BE ABLE TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) US/ROK COOPERATION: I WOULD ASSURE THE ROKG THAT ALL ARRANGEMENTS FOR ANY TRIPARTITE MEETINGS WOULD BE THE RESULT OF AGREED POSITIONS ARRIVED AT THROUGH CONSULTATIONS
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BETWEEN THE USG AND ROKG. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD WE MAKE ANY PROPOSALS WITH RESPECT TO SUCH TALKS WITHOUT FIRST CONSULTING WITH AND OBTAINING THE AGREEMENT OF THE ROKG.

(B) LEVEL AT WHICH TALKS SHOULD BE HELD: I WOULD SUGGEST THAT OUR POSITION ON THIS, IF AGREEABLE TO THE ROKG, WOULD BE THAT TALKS SHOULD NOT BE ABOVE THE AMBASSADOR/ASSISTANT SECRETARY LEVEL AND SHOULD NOT BE BELOW THE BUREAU DIRECTOR/COUNTRY DIRECTOR LEVEL.

(C) AGENDA FOR SUCH TALKS: HERE I WOULD SUGGEST THAT IN ORDER TO DETERMINE THE WILLINGNESS OF THE NORTH TO ENTER INTO A MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE, WE WOULD PROPOSE THAT AN INITIAL AGENDA DESIGNED TO REDUCE TENSION ON THE PENINSULA BE ACCEPTED. SUITABLE TOPICS FOR SUCH AN AGENDA WOULD BE: (1) RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF A DIRECT NORTH/SOUTH DISCUSSION FORUM, (2) EXCHANGE VISITS BY FAMILIES AND VISITATIONS TO FAMILY TOMBS, (3) POSSIBLE INITIATION OF SOME TRADE AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH, AND (4) CESSATION OF PROPAGANDA EFFORTS AND COMPETITION IN UN AND NON-ALIGNED FORA. SHOULD

PROGRESS PROVE POSSIBLE ON SOME OF THESE ITEMS, WE
COULD THEN EXPAND THE TALKS TO COVER ITEMS SUCH AS A
FOLLOW-ON ARRANGEMENT TO REPLACE THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SEOUL 2603

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(D) LOCATION FOR TALKS: I WOULD SUGGEST THAT TALKS
BE HELD ON NEUTRAL GROUND, PERHAPS GENEVA OR A COUNTRY
WHERE ALL THREE PARTICIPANTS ARE REPRESENTED AT THE
AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL. I WOULD DISCOURAGE ANY THOUGHT OF
HOLDING INITIAL DISCUSSIONS IN KOREA ON THE GROUNDS THAT
THE LOCATION ITSELF WOULD INTRODUCE EMOTION INTO THE
DISCUSSION AND WOULD WORK AGAINST POSITIVE RESULTS BEING
ACHIEVED.

(E) PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENT: WITH RESPECT TO THIS
ASPECT, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO ASSURE THE ROKG
THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD THE USG AGREE TO ANY
ARRANGEMENTS WHICH DID NOT TREAT ALL THREE PARTIES IN
EXACTLY THE SAME MANNER AND WHICH DID NOT INSURE THAT
THE ROK WOULD HAVE FULL AND DIRECT PARTICIPATION.

4. IN GIVING THE ROKG THE DETAILS IN PARA 3 ABOVE
I WOULD, OF COURSE, STRESS THAT THESE IDEAS WERE THOSE
OF THE U.S. SIDE ONLY. WE WOULD HOPE TO HAVE ROK
REACTIONS AND COUNTER PROPOSALS, IF ANY, AND, SHOULD
THE NORTH RESPOND WITH ANY INTEREST TO THE YUGOSLAVS,
WE WOULD EXPECT TO MAKE A JOINT U.S./ROK PROPOSAL
AVAILABLE TO THE YUGOSLAVS. IT IS MY HOPE THAT BY
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GIVING THE ROKG SOME DETAILS OF THIS NATURE WE CAN
INDUCE SUFFICIENT CONFIDENCE IN THEM OF THEIR CONTROL
OF THE SITUATION TO MOVE TO A MORE POSITIVE POSITION
ON THIS MATTER.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT I BE AUTHORIZED TO APPROACH
THE ROKG ALONG THE LINES OF PARAS 3 AND 4 ABOVE.
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